



Key Messages

**Residential Wood Combustion
National Education Program**

Discussion Draft 1

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Task Group on Education and Change-Out

Background

A key message is the phrase which will most often be a person's first exposure to a program. The chief purpose of a key message is to attract the interest of the program's target audience. The key message should appeal to the target groups to encourage further examination of the program.

The goal of a National Education Program on Residential Wood Combustion (RWC) is to reduce wood smoke emissions, thereby minimizing on the health effects of Canadians and the environment. This needs to be reflected in the key message in a way which captures the attention and interest of the programs target audience. The primary target groups for this National Education Program are:

Canadians, including First Nations in urban or rural residences that use wood heat to any extent to heat their homes or cottages.

Criteria for Choosing an Effective Key Message

Below are criteria for choosing an effective key message. The most important aspect to consider is how the target groups will respond. A key message is only effective if it encourages the target audience to further exam the program.

In order to be considered as a key message for a National Education Program on Residential Wood Combustion (RWC) each message should try to meet the following criteria:

- The message must be positive in nature.
- It should give the target audience a reason to seek more information about the program, it could be informational and/or participatory.
- It should provide people that heat with wood, with a complete picture of wood burning (pros and cons) and actions they can take to reduce or eliminate their wood burning emissions.
- It must be inclusive of all of the primary target groups.
- It should support the program's goal of reducing RWC emissions
- It should be an effective message on its own (that is, without further information to clarify or back it up).

The length that the National Education Program will run should be considered when deciding on key messages. A campaign which runs for one burning season would likely take a different approach than a campaign which runs for 15 years. As a change in mentality and practise takes time, as does reaching a large, widespread, and diverse group; a longer National Education Program would be ideal.

In terms of selecting a key message, a longer campaign means that the messages chosen should be more general and adaptable to different themes. This way, the campaign could focus on a different aspect of the program each year. Having a slightly different focus each burning season will encourage continued interest of previous participants, who would then have the opportunity to gain knowledge on another aspect of wood burning. It would also reach more people, not only due to its longer run, but also because each new focus would appeal more to a certain group. This would give the opportunity to increase understanding of the programs messages with each of the primary target groups and any secondary target groups.

Key Messages Development

Before developing key messages, some important background information should be revisited. The following information is from the document: *Final Strategy– A Canadian Social Marketing Campaign on Residential Wood Combustion*. This strategy helped to create Natural Resources Canada's Burn it Smart Campaign. It provides valuable insight into the wood burning demographics in Canada.

Focus groups were carried out in December 2000 that identified the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of individuals who heat with wood. This research revealed that people who burn wood as a primary or secondary source have a culture of their own. Although it must be noted that focus group data is qualitative and cannot be extrapolated to the population at large, the information we received was very consistent on the following points:

- *Wood burners do not generally believe they have inefficient stoves;*
- *Wood burners do not make the link between inefficiency and air pollution;*
- *No wood burner feels that he or she is polluting the atmosphere in a major way. Wood burners believe that automobile exhaust and industrial smoke are far more polluting than wood smoke;*
- *Wood burners believe that burning wood is a "natural" source of energy and that trees are on the earth to be burned;*
- *Wood burners search out the best prices for the type of wood they require. Some pay as little as \$25 for a season's worth of wood by purchasing a permit to cut standing dead-wood;*
- *Wood burners like the smell, warmth and ambiance of a wood fire;*
- *Wood burners are dedicated to burning, especially those who cut, haul, split, stack and carry their own wood. It is part of how they define themselves and what they do. (i.e. In early summer they go into the woods to cut trees; they split and stack the wood so it will dry over the summer months, or in late August/early September they begin to shop around for wood to purchase; they begin burning in early November (depending on the climate—all year round in Whitehorse) and by Christmas they are constantly stoking the fire; if they go on vacation, some have to enlist family and friends to keep the wood stove going so that their pipes do not freeze.);*
- *Wood burners would continue to burn with wood, even if they were given a new home;*
- *Wood burners feel that burning with wood makes them self-sufficient and not*

- *dependent on anyone for a source of heat or an ability to cook food;*
- *Wood burners like to talk to other wood burners about the price and availability of wood, the types of stoves available and different kinds of wood burning systems;*
- *Wood burners are concerned about safety.*

As such, it appears that those who heat with wood genuinely enjoy doing so. As a group they are independent and proud of their self-sufficiency. The full focus group research report provides greater detail on these issues.

Another section of the same report described potential key messages that were drawn from potential campaign themes. The section can be found in Appendix A.

A summary of the potential key messages from the GPC report follows:

1. If you heat with wood, help reduce pollution by burning efficiently.
Sub-messages:
 - Use a fuel-efficient appliance (EPA/CSA certified cleaner burning);
 - Burn efficiently (choice of wood; size and position of appliance; hot, smaller fires; clean chimney, etc.)
2. Follow local advisories regarding when, where and how to burn.
3. Know your wood, where it comes from and how it is harvested.
4. Buy an EPA/CSA certified appliance, for added safety.
5. Burning efficiently saves money and time, and is more convenient.
6. High efficiency stoves look better and are easier to keep clean than conventional models.

These messages were largely incorporated into the Burn it Smart education campaign.

Key Messages Chosen for Inclusion in a National Education Campaign on Residential Wood Combustion

In creating a new National Education Program on Residential Wood Combustion, additional messages may be warranted or desired. Appendix B contains a table of some potential concepts for key messages with critiques following each concept.

Choosing Key Messages...

To be discussed...

Appendix A

The following information is from the document: *Final Strategy– A Canadian Social Marketing Campaign on Residential Wood Combustion*. This strategy helped to create Natural Resources Canada's Burn it Smart Campaign. It provides valuable insight into the wood burning demographics in Canada.

A summary of the draft messages follows:

1. If you heat with wood, help reduce pollution by burning efficiently.
Sub-messages:
 - Use a fuel-efficient appliance (EPA/CSA certified cleaner burning);
 - Burn efficiently (choice of wood; size and position of appliance; hot, smaller fires; clean chimney, etc.)
2. Follow local advisories regarding when, where and how to burn.
3. Know your wood, where it comes from and how it is harvested.
4. Buy an EPA/CSA certified appliance, for added safety.
5. Burning efficiently saves money and time, and is more convenient.
6. High efficiency stoves look better and are easier to keep clean than conventional models.

Below is the wording taken directly from the report (the numbering system has changed due to importation of the information into this Appendix).

.1 Campaign Themes

.1.1 Health and Environment

Many participants in the focus groups did not believe that wood burning in Canada was an environmental and/or health problem. A huge effort will have to be put into raising awareness, including information about the number of households burning wood in Canada and the link between wood smoke and respiratory problems. This message, in and of itself, will not cause wood burners to change their practices; however, linked with the messages of cost and convenience (burning less fuel) and safety (i.e. cleaner chimney, less chance of a chimney fire), it could have some impact on people's understanding of efficient burning practices.

Over 3 million Canadians burn wood for heat. The resulting smoke is the source of significant pollution, affecting the air you breathe both inside and outside your home. When proper wood fuel is burned efficiently, it releases fewer of the air pollutants that impact human health, and indoor and outdoor air quality. ("Proper wood fuel" includes pellets, clean, seasoned wood appropriate to the region, and environmentally sound manufactured fire logs.)

Deleted:

Draft Message:

1. If you heat with wood, help reduce pollution by burning efficiently.

Sub-messages:

- Use a fuel-efficient appliance (EPA/CSA certified cleaner burning);
- Burn efficiently (choice of wood; size and position of appliance; hot, smaller fires; clean chimney, etc.)

Under some weather conditions and in urban areas, local advisories may be issued providing information on where and when, and possibly how, to burn (quick tips).

Draft Message:

2. Follow local advisories regarding when, where and how to burn.

N.B. This message should make it clear that burn bans are not applicable to those who are entirely dependent on wood as a heat source. These people should, however, be encouraged to burn as efficiently as possible—hot fire, wood appropriate to the region, etc. It was also suggested that those who use high-efficiency stoves should be eliminated from burn bans. This recommendation requires discussion by the Steering Committee.

Wood fuel for home heating can be a sustainable energy source, if proper harvesting practices are followed.

Draft Message:

3. Know your wood, where it comes from and how it is harvested.

Safety

Certified fuel-efficient appliances (EPA/CSA approved) dramatically reduce the risk of chimney fire, because most of the smoke is burned inside the firebox rather than condensing in the chimney as creosote.

Draft Message:

4. Buy an EPA/CSA certified appliance, for added safety.

This tested as a particularly powerful message in focus groups. Wood burners are very concerned about chimney fires.

Cost and Convenience

A high-efficiency appliance uses up to 1/3 less wood than a conventional model, saving from \$260-400 per year for those who heat full-time with wood, and up to \$130 for occasional users.

Improved wood burning practices can reduce wood consumption by up to 25%. In addition to cost savings, less wood translates into less time stacking and feeding the appliance, and less effort removing and disposing of ash.

Draft Message:

5. Burning efficiently saves money and time, and is more convenient.

The emphasis on convenience, rather than cost savings, proved more powerful in focus groups. Many rural burners do not have to pay for their

wood, so actual cash savings are minimal.

Aesthetics

High-efficiency stoves or fireplace inserts create a beautiful, highly visible flame through a double-burn, "air-wash" process that keeps the glass effortlessly clear.

Draft Message:

6. *High efficiency stoves look better and are easier to keep clean than conventional models.*

APPENDIX B – Message Matrix

Pros and Cons of Various Messages			
	Key Message / Concept	Pro	Con
1	Wood burning can be harmful to your health and environment.	Negative messaging can be very effective at grabbing attention.	The message is negative.
2	Use proper wood burning practices.	Positive message.	This focus is similar to other messages and does not provide new information.
3	Make an informed heating choice.	This is not specific to wood heating. It also focuses more on changing appliances (to other wood stoves or other heating types) rather than on improving burning techniques. A variation of this concept which is more specific and includes the importance of	Complete, clear, and calls all the health and woodburning heating.
4	Burn better or, if appropriate, switch to another form of heating (including upgrading to EPA).	Encourages people to upgrade or switch to less polluting options.	This message does not tell people they are aware of or make them
5	Reduce or eliminate woodsmoke emissions.	This is the ultimate goal of the program.	Saying that emissions are bad and people have a choice in heating.

Pros and Cons of Various Mes:

	Key Message / Concept	Pro	Con
6	Wood burning is a source of pollution.	Factual statement.	Many w singled messag this mes (other h
7	Wood burning safety	Safety is a major concern among Canadians.	This me program Though the prog workshc
8	Understanding the (health and environmental) implications of wood burning	The word "understanding" implies that clarification will be provided.	This cot is bad, v burners conside avoid at
9	3 keys to reducing wood smoke: Good appliance, good fuel, good user	Action oriented, covers all aspects	Only ap

Proposed Messages versus Program

		Positive Message?	People want to seek more info?	Complete picture?	Helps r emissi		
1	Wood burning can be harmful to your health and environment.	no	possibly	no	ye		
2	Use proper wood burning practices.	yes	yes	no	ye		
3	Make an informed heating choice.	yes	yes	no	poss		
4	Burn better or, if appropriate, switch to another form of heating (including upgrading to EPA).	yes	possibly	no	ye		
5	Reduce or eliminate wood smoke emissions.	no	possibly	no	ye		
6	Wood burning is a source of pollution.	no	possibly	no	poss		
7	Wood burning safety	yes	yes	no	poss		
8	Understanding the (health and environmental) implications of wood burning	no	possibly	no	poss		
9	3 keys to reducing wood smoke: Good appliance, good fuel, good user	yes	possibly	yes	ye		